

TESTIMONY
PRESENTED TO
THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
HEARING ON CENSUS 2000
Implementation in Indian Country

PRESENTED BY

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Written Testimony of Gregory (Greg) A. Richardson, Member Census Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native Populations, presented to the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, May 4, 1999, 9:30 a.m., Washington, D. C.

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs! My name is Greg Richardson, and I am a member of the Census Advisory Committee on American and Alaska Native Populations. I am an enrolled member of the Haliwa-Saponi Indian Tribe of North Carolina. I am also the Executive Director of the North Carolina State Commission of Indian Affairs. In North Carolina, I serve as the State Liaison for the State Designated American Indian Statistical Areas Program.

I bring you greetings from the great state of North Carolina and from the Indian population represented by seven Indian tribes and three urban Indian center associations in North Carolina. North Carolina is home to over 80,000 American Indians, and we have the largest American Indian population of any state east of the Mississippi River.

My role here today is to speak to you about the implementation of the Year 2000 Census. I have served on the Census Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native Populations since 1996. I am honored to sit before you today as you address the implementation of the Year 2000 census. My testimony today will perhaps be somewhat different from the testimony of my colleagues, because I did not grow up on an Indian reservation and because I am not a member of a federally recognized tribe. Nevertheless, I am an American Indian, and my tribe has a long-standing historic relationship with the state government of North Carolina, and is legally recognized as such. I attended grammar school at the old Haliwa Indian School, an old wood-frame building in rural Warren County, North Carolina. Haliwa Indian School was built by the individual efforts of our tribal members, during a time period in North Carolina history when there were public schools for Whites and Blacks, but no schools for Indians in our community. After several years of operating solely from tribal support, state funding was authorized for our school.

The U. S. Department of Commerce/Bureau of the Census has generally done a good job in terms of planning for the Year 2000 Census, in my humble opinion. The authorizations of the Census Advisory Committees on the American Indians (the first Americans) and Alaska Natives, African American, Asian and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic Populations have been extremely important in terms of consultation with communities represented by these committee members. Therefore, I urge you to continue the authorization of legislation that will assure that these communities are represented as plans are developed for all future censuses.

Since 1995, the Bureau of the Census has been engaged in the planning and development for the next decennial census. As we know, the United States Constitution requires that a census be taken every ten years and that every US citizen be counted, if possible. This supreme mandate for enumeration is without regard to whether people live on Indian reservations, in rural North Carolina, the inner city, or in Alaska Native Villages.

The work of planning and organizing for a new census is not a simple task. It is time consuming, and in order to assure that the job is done effectively, fair and equitable requires a great deal of technical knowledge, research and federal appropriations. However, American Indians have historically been inadequately informed about the importance of being counted, have never really been made a formal partner to the process and have thus been under counted during each decennial census in the past.

According to the 1990 Census, 1.9 million American Indian citizens reside in the United States, which makes up approximately 1.2 percent of the total population. The census data indicates that there were 150 different languages spoken by this population; that there were 532 federally recognized tribes in 1990, and that 22 percent of the Indian population lives on 500 reservations. Additionally, census data indicate that

62 percent of the US American Indian population lived outside of Indian reservations. Considering the data, it is alarming that very few policies or programs are in place at the Bureau of Census to assure a complete count of American Indians who live on Indian reservations, outside Indian reservations, in rural or urban communities. With this in mind, I want to take this opportunity place several questions before the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs regarding these issues and they are as follows:

1. Have we gone far enough to assure that every American Indians are counted during the Year 2000 census?

I am not convinced that we have gone far enough! Dress rehearsals conducted among the American Indian population were very limited, and the effectiveness, success, and relativity to varied Indian community settings is questionable. In my opinion, the Dress Rehearsals have not been terribly effective. For example, during the South Carolina Dress Rehearsal, American Indian data was NOT collected. However, South Carolina is located in the regional service area of the Census Bureau's Charlotte, North Carolina office, and there are four Indian reservations in that region; seven Indian tribes are located in North Carolina alone, nevertheless, no Indian data was collected! I think this was a major oversight and steps should be taken to correct this matter, because a major under count will severely reduce funding appropriations for public schools, highways, housing and other programs that will improve Indian communities.

2. Have we gone far enough to recognize tribal sovereignty and the government-to-government relationship between Indian tribes and the Bureau of the Census?

I do not think so! I recommend that the Bureau of the Census fully recognize Indian tribal sovereignty and thus strengthen the government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes. Improving the relationship between the census bureau and tribes would assuredly be positive steps towards fulfilling the federal commitment to Indian tribes as written in an Executive Order issued by President Clinton.

3. Have the tribes been made full partners with the Bureau of the Census, in terms of planning for the Year 2000 Census?

The programs developed by the Bureau of the Census for the purpose of advertising the Year 2000 census in Indian communities should be improved. These programs should be required to partner with tribes and other Indian entities to perform this work. Who can reach tribal community members better than tribal governments? Who knows the Indian community better than Indian leadership from the Indian community? I recommend that the Bureau of the Census develop formal partnerships and collaborative working agreements with tribes and other Indian agencies to assure that the TOTAL Indian community is reached and that the advertisements are culturally sensitive.

I think the Statistical Area Programs developed by the Bureau of the Census are good examples of how partnerships can be developed with tribes. These programs are quasi partnership programs, because they rely on tribal leaders to provide information, designate tribal boundaries, and provide an opportunity for state governments to provide input into this process. This program, in my opinion, places Indian tribes and other Indian agencies into a quasi government-to-government relationship with the Bureau of the Census, and should be continued and enhanced.

4. Has the Bureau of the Census performed adequate outreach in Indian communities and employed American Indians in policy making positions at the state, regional, and federal level in preparation for the Year 2000 Census?

The answer to this question is, not sufficiently enough! Currently, there few American Indians are employed in policy making positions at the Bureau of the Census. Most American Indians employed at the Bureau of the Census are employed at the GS-10 pay grade or lower, with very few employed at the GS 14-15 pay grade. What I find most troublesome is the fact that, in comparison to other minority

groups, there are no American Indians holding positions at the Deputy Assistant Secretary (or equivalent) level.

There are many questions that could raise here today, however, in the interest of time I will end my questions here. Instead, I will move on and give you several recommendations for improving the implementation of the Year 2000 census.

We must develop ways to assure that the American Indian population is NOT under counted! Therefore, I recommend that:

1. The Bureau of the Census should continue the following American Indian and Alaska Native Geographic Area Programs:

The Statistical Area Programs

-Tribal Jurisdiction Statistical Area Program (TJSAs) Program

Definition: The Tribal Jurisdiction Statistical Area Program (TJSAs) should be continued. Geographic areas are delineated by federally recognized Indian tribes in Oklahoma that do not have a reservation. Generally defined to encompass the area over which one or more tribal governments have jurisdiction.

Status: Tribal governments can insert their boundaries into the TIGER data base. It is my understanding that 38 of the 39 tribes participated in this program. The Kansas City Regional Census Center Geographic and tribal staff have worked to obtain plans from tribes. It is also my understanding that the program is open to participation through June 1999. I suggest that this program be extended to September 30, 1999 to coincide with the end of the federal fiscal year and to give tribes three additional months to insert their boundary information into the TIGER data base.

-Tribal Designated Statistical Areas (TDSAs) Program

Definition: Geographic area delineated by federally recognized Indian tribes in states other than Oklahoma not located on a reservation. Generally defined to encompass the areas of a concentration of tribal membership or an area where the tribe provides services or benefits.

Note: the TDSA program will include Alaska Native Tribes that are not included in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. (P.O. 92-203)

Status: The Geography Division of the Bureau of the Census prepared the final criteria for the TDSA program. A review by the Census Bureau's Statistical Areas Committee (SAC) was to occur in December 1998. In addition, the Census Bureau was to verify the list of federally recognized tribes to determine the potential universe of participation. The final work on this program is to be completed by December 1999.

-State Designated American Indian Statistical Areas (SDAISAs) Program

Definition: Geographic areas delineated by a state liaison designated by the governor for state-recognized American Indian tribes without a reservation. Generally defined to encompass the area of a concentration of tribal membership or an area where the tribe provides services or benefits.

Status: The Bureau of the Census contacted each state to obtain the name of a liaison and information about the existence of state-recognized Indian tribes during the summer of 1999. A total of 28 of the 49 states (excluding Hawaii) responded. The Geography Division is preparing specialized letters for each state either requesting a liaison or verifying or clarifying the information provided in their response.

The Geography Division was required to prepare the final criteria for the Statistical Designated American

Indian Statistical area program. This review is to be completed by December 1999.

This is a very valuable program because of the fact that according to the 1990 census 62 percent of the US American Indian population resided outside Indian reservations in other rural and urban communities. Therefore, if the Bureau of the Census is to meet its constitutional mandate to count every American citizen, the State Designated American Indian Statistical Area Program will assure that an accurate count is achieved.

-Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas (ANVSAs) Program

Definition: Geographic areas delineated by federally recognized Alaska Native Village officials or by a representative of the nonprofit Alaska Native Regional Corporation. This program represents the settled areas of each Alaska Native Village recognized pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANVSA-P. L. 92-203).

Status: The Geography Division is required to prepare the final criteria for this program. The Census Bureau's Statistical Areas Committee (SAC) was planned for December 1998. In Addition, the Census Bureau was to verify the list of federally recognized Alaska Native Villages under ANVSA and as an adjunct, those tribes that qualify for the TDSA program to determine the potential universe of participants.

-Participant Statistical Area Program (PSAP)

Definition: The PSAP provides the opportunity for qualifying federally recognized tribes with a land base or a TJSA to delineate census tracts, block groups, census designated places and /or census county divisions for Census 2000. Participating tribes must qualify, based on population thresholds required for each program.

Status: The Bureau of the Census was to deliver annotation maps to participating tribes by February 1999.

Legal Area Programs

-1998 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) Program

Definition: The BAS is a survey designed to update the information that the Census Bureau has on file about the legal boundaries and names of federally recognized American Indian reservations and off-reservation trust lands (both tribal and individual trust lands). The Census Bureau was to mail the surveys directly to designated tribal officials.

Status: The 1998 BAS has been completed. Of the 310 American Indian areas included in the survey 86 responded, or 27.5 percent.

-1999 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) Program

Definition: The BAS is a survey designed to update the information the Census Bureau has about the legal Boundaries, and names of Federally recognized American Indian reservations and off reservation trust lands (both tribal and individual trust lands). The Census Bureau mailed the survey directly to designated tribal officials.

Status: To improve the response for 1999, the Census Bureau made significant changes to the 1999 BAS.

This program should be continued because it provides an opportunity for the Bureau of the Census and Indian tribes to enter into partnership agreements.

-2000 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS)

Definition: The BAS is a survey designed to update the information the Bureau of the Census has on file about the legal boundaries and names of federally recognized American Indian reservations and off-reservation trust lands (both tribal and individual trust lands).

Status: To improve the response for 1999, the Census Bureau is making significant changes to the 1999 BAS:

-The Regional Bureaus of the Census Center staff will conduct the 2000 BAS through their Geographic and Tribal Specialist.

-Regional Census Bureau Center staff will work directly with the tribes and provide direct assistance to facilitate responses.

In closing, I would like to take another opportunity to encourage the Bureau of the Census to Develop formal partnerships or collaborative agreements with Indian tribes and state governments that serve Indian citizens to assure that the American Indian population is not under counted. I especially want to encourage the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs to seriously consider the following initiatives:

a. Developing an American Indian Census Promotion Program: The Bureau of the Census should develop collaborative working agreements and partnerships with Tribes and other Indian agencies to promote the Year 2000 Census and all future censuses. Therefore, a program such as this would provide an opportunity for the Bureau of the Census to work directly with tribes through its regional offices and formerly promote the census in Indian communities. This is very necessary because many tribes do not have the resources to promote the census on their own.

b. Continue the Census Advisory Committee on the American Indian and Alaska Native Populations. I believe that it is very important to continue this committee if the Bureau of the Census is to provide an adequate count of the American Indian population. This committee provides a very important bridge of communication between the Census Bureau, tribal governments and Indian citizens in the United States. The program promotes cultural diversity and provides opportunities for new partnerships to be forged. Therefore, I urge you to reauthorize appropriations for this committee.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, thank you for allowing me the opportunity and honor to address you today. I hope that you will continue to support the efforts of the Bureau of the Census and work to assure that the American Indian population of the United States is fully counted during the Year 2000 census.

Gregory A. Richardson
Member

Census Advisory Committee on American Indians and Alaska Native Populations